

[The following letter is from our contemporary "The Naval and Military Record" of August 15th.—EDITOR N.W.O.J.]

HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE.

SIR,—The wide circulation of your paper among the seamen and marines of the British fleet makes its columns a fit and proper place for the "handy man" and his sea chum and fellow fighter, the "Jolly," to thank Messrs. Kearley, White, and Yerburg, M.P.'s for their share of the work of bringing about a reform in naval seamen's food. Mr. Kearley and Capt. Young, R.N.—who, unfortunately, for the Navy has now retired from Parliament—were among the first to move in this matter in the House of Commons, and Mr. Arnold-Forster, who also deserves the thanks of the fleet, granted a committee which has now reported in the only way that those who knew anticipated they would report, and the Admiralty will certainly carry out some of their recommendations. It was on this committee and on board the *Ramillies* that Messrs. White and Yerburgh earned the gratitude of the service. For the help of others in Parliament and the press the seamen and marines will also feel grateful.

Mr. Kearley, however, who represents a naval constituency, and represents it fully and well, has also succeeded by his tenacity and persistency in bringing about another reform by the investigation which he was the means of obtaining into the affairs of Patriotic Fund. The nation owes Mr. Kearley a debt for his trouble in this matter; but the Army and the Navy are especially indebted to him. With such valiant champions as these in Parliament it will not be necessary to resort to acts of violence or insubordination in order to call attention to grievances which the authorities and the country are willing to redress if once the facts are fully placed before them, and the need for reform be plainly shown. Those who take the trouble to investigate these things for themselves are entitled to, and will obtain, the gratitude of the men of the fleet, who, by this means, will be encouraged to even excel their past and present loyal and devoted services to their King and country. Discipline will not suffer, but will be improved, by the removal of legitimate grievances among the rank and file of the fighting services.

BANKER.

According to a correspondent of the *Liverpool Post*, there has been up to the 1st August last, from the commencement of the South African War, no less than 667 commissions granted to rankers of the Army and Auxiliary forces. The number of commissions granted to the senior service is nil, while one Warrant Officer has been advanced to the rank of lieutenant. It is to be hoped that his Majesty may observe this very glaring divergence of practice, and himself take the initiative to adjust the procedure of the Navy on Army lines by promoting a number of deserving Warrant and Petty Officers to the commissioned ranks of the Royal Navy.

We notice that when the new Governor His Excellency Sir Henry McCallum, of Natal, held his first levee at Durban. Mr. Lacey, R.N., carpenter, was among those who had entree by special invitation. This reminds us that Mr. Lacey is still doing most responsible, if somewhat obscure, work in Natal in connection with the transport department.

BERMUDA is looking up and getting lively with Boer prisoners. Mr. Pitt has been in command of the *Medina* and Mr. Whyte in command of the *Medway* guarding Darrels Island where the Boer camp is situated. The *Hotspur* is now to be added. The *Malabar* has been re-named and is now to perpetuate the name of *Terror* at the Bermuda's: a name that has been associated

THE EMPIRE'S DEFENCE.

IMPERIAL defence is a matter which should now be engaging the most serious attention of every good citizen of our vast and wealthy empire—as we have been shown, now, how coveted a thing is the possession of such dominions and resources as those which owe allegiance, either direct or indirect, to the British Crown. The bared teeth of a few months ago, which glistened and gnashed among the nations on the Continent of Europe, when the power and might of Britain appeared to tremble in the balance, must not be forgotten, or their importance minimised, before we have ordered our house in such a fashion as to render any future display of this envy, hatred, malice and uncharitableness as impotent as it was in the black months at the end of the last and the beginning of the new century. Nations which we had numbered among our best friends, and who in some cases owed their very existence to the action of Great Britain, showed how fickle a thing is friendship and how still more fickle is gratitude. They believed they saw a rich prize—the British Empire—on the verge of being scrawbled for, and they bared their teeth and talons to take part in the carnival. That they were bitterly disappointed does not count to them for righteousness: although it

A FINAL APPEAL.

THE *Terrible* has been followed by the *Barstew* in making a splendid score on the prize-firing target for ships' guns. She is not so good as the leader of the fleet, but then the *Terrible* has the advantage of being commanded by that past master of the art of straight-shooting—Captain Percy Scott—who is also the chief apostle of this new cult of substituting straight-shooting for par excellence of spit and polish. We therefore heartily congratulate the *Barstew's* on their splendid performance, and we

We are asked by a correspondent if we think it *Is it* advisable to discuss such matters as "D.B. *advisable?* Reform" outside of our meeting rooms?

Naturally our answer to this question is that we *do* think it advisable—very much advisable. We will tell our correspondent why. Our meetings are not so well attended as they might be, and it is the constant complaint of those that will work that they are left to do too much, and to occasionally shoulder too much responsibility by their decisions and votes. In this complaint there is only too much justice. It is not, perhaps, that those who stay away are really less interested, and they are certainly not less intelligent, but they are less zealous and energetic than those who attend. Well, now, when Mahomet found that the mountain would not come to him, Mahomet went to the mountain. As many of our members won't come to the meetings the *Journal* can, in this way of thrashing important points out by correspondence, take the affairs of the Association to its members. It is no use declaring this is laziness; as before this was done they were even more lazy, and they could not be cured by all the abuse the workers heaped upon them. The *Journal* was established as a link between home and foreign members, and by thrashing an important point out in public everyone is brought cognisant of the arguments pro and con, whether they choose to take part in the discussion or not. In this way the *Journal* holds much larger

EDUCATION.

SIR,—Your leader in the *Journal* for September, in which emphasis is laid on the importance of education, provides food for serious thought and opens up a subject of vital importance to the service and the W O.'s.

It need not be supposed that the consideration of questions affecting the advancement of our class or the holding of decided views on the same is confined to those who already hold, or have held, the rank of Chief or W.O. Many of our younger men are, very materially, interested in the subject, and your article recalls certain conclusions which were forced upon your correspondent in earlier days and at a time when he could claim to have been at least an impartial and disinterested observer.

The fact of your having dealt with one aspect of the question emboldens him to make public what he believes to be a well grounded opinion, with a view to eliciting further light on the subject from others of your readers, and if possible of devising some practical scheme for improvement in this particular direction.

Briefly then, the conclusion arrived at in those earlier days—and which has been confirmed by further experience—*i.e.*, that when Warrant Officers and candidates for that rank attain a higher standard of general education their prospects of receiving certain long-sought concessions will become very much better. Without that levelling-up which is here referred to as necessary all the external influences which can be brought to bear can not secure to us what we desire.

The W.O.'s of H.M.S. *Viobe* were "At-Home" to their brother officers of the *Ophir* and her consorts, on their arrival at St. Vincent.

*The
Royal
Tour.*

The invitation was made general from the *Ophir*, and was cordially responded to by the W.O.'s of *Diadem*, *Juno* and *St. George*.

The schoolroom which was kindly lent by Comr. Henago for the occasion, was illuminated and tastefully decorated.

A well served dinner was partaken of and a most enjoyable evening was spent by all.

It was much regretted that the W.O.'s of the *Ophir* were unable to attend owing to the operation of coaling.

THE wreck of the *Cobra* is one of those sad things that, like occasional disasters in South Africa, we have to take in the stride of Empire. Considering the vast tonnage of our Navy we have comparatively few

*The price
in blood.*

accidents to our ships; but when disaster does overtake us the loss of life is generally very severe. It has been very severe in the case of the *Cobra*, and our readers will desire us, on their behalf, to give public expression to their heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved ones of all classes; but more especially to the widows and children of our late well known and respected colleagues Messrs. Woods and Cole. Neither of these officers, unfortunately, belonged to the D.B.A.; but we do hope and trust, for the sake of those they have left behind, that their lives were assured in other societies. If they were not, then once again there is the old story of procrastination and its dire results. They laid down their lives like the Britons and heroes they were: but their last thoughts must have been for those they were leaving behind. What if they knew they were unprovided for? We hope such a thought did not afflict them; but we do once more call the attention of all those among our colleagues who are not assured, to the suddenness with which our end may come, and beseech them, to join the Death Benefit Association.

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DEATH BENEFIT REFORM.

THE correspondence which has been running in our columns in regard to D.B. reform, is just the sort of criticism which is most profitable to the Association and is most likely to lead to the very best results. Mr. Capper's letter was especially frank and courageous, and a few months ago would have raised a storm of protest and personal abuse. Be it now said to our credit we have advanced beyond all such limited scope of mind and narrow mental horizon; and all can discuss matters in which all are concerned without each believing the other is making a personal attack, when only principles have been mentioned or criticised. The courage with which Mr. Capper has tackled the matter is only equalled by the force with which he has expressed his arguments and made his points. His figures may not be absolutely correct, but that does not discredit his main arguments which tend to show that as an Association we spend too much honorary money on objects for which it is not subscribed, and that the expenses of our society are increasing at too great a rate for the small benefit which the members obtain, owing to the manner in which the money is laid out. The large expenditure on an office at Portsmouth comes in for censure, and the committee is advised to turn it into a reading room—a suggestion with which most of the members will, we think, agree.

We had the advantage of discussing this matter the other day with the Portsmouth secretary, who appears to be in sympathy with such a change but who pointed out that such a transformation would entail considerable initial and up-keeping expenses. On these points, however, we find ourselves at issue with Mr. Mr. Davidson, for, in our opinion, a very little indeed is

required. The present oil cloth could be replaced by linoleum when it was worn out in a year or two's time; and thus any great initial expenses would be avoided. In regard to the cleaning and the lighting and laying of the fire, etc., and locking-up at nights, we imagine a trustworthy woman from the adjacent streets could be found to do this for 2/6 or 3/- per week, as it would not be more than an hour's work each morning, or about six hours' work in all each week. Besides the additional reading matter we do not see what other extra expenses there need be to those already existing; among which, of course, there is the occasional cleaning of the room we are now discussing. Coal and light charges would also be a little heavier than at present. Anyhow, it seems to us it would be better to add this little expense and let the place be enjoyed by the many than retain it at the present expense for an office or committee room only. In discussing this matter, however, it must be remembered that neither Devonport or Chatham spend anything like the same amount of money for offices or reading rooms. This is entirely at their option, we allow, and may be either a good or a bad policy. For ourselves we agree with a reading room, or club, for the use of active and retired officers, and should like to see one at each port. But that is, of course, a personal opinion, and quite beside the mark when the equity of local control of funds, and the purposes for which honorary funds are used, are under consideration.

Obviously it is useless for one branch to practice economy and for the others to disregard it. There ought to be some kind of uniformity in these matters, and as the honorary money is subscribed to the Association (no matter to which branch the money is paid) for Association work, so ought all members (no matter to which branch they belong) have a say and a vote as to the manner in which these funds are to be spent. This, to our mind, seems an argument in favour of the separate banking and administration of the honorary funds as suggested by "Impartial" in his letter in our August issue. In discussing this subject with Mr. Davidson, who speaks with weight and experience on such a matter, it was pointed out to us—and it impressed us at the moment—that great care would have to be taken or a great danger would arise in the method of collecting the monies for the two funds (i.e. D.B. and Honorary) if they were divorced one from the other. Mr. Davidson pointed out that most members paid these monies together, and at the same time, and thought that greater difficulties would be experienced in collecting them if they were separated. We say that at the time this impressed

us : but on reflection we see no reason in the world why there should be any such separation in the act of payment. The same secretaries (the salaried secretaries) could receive both lots of money from our members, as at present. They need only be banked and administered separately. They could even have the same trustees as at present : so that the treasurer would have no extra trouble in getting money out of the bank when he wanted it. All that could be as now. It is the administration and control of honorary funds which our correspondents say should be altered ; and we are bound to say we agree with them. It is true we have muddled along very comfortably up till now ; but that is no reason why we should not better our plan if we can do so with advantage. Reading rooms and expensive offices are latter-day developments, and need legislating for in our modern rules. The old order of things are passing away, and we must keep our house in order and up to date. In registered societies separate accounts have to be strictly kept and rendered. No mixing up or muddling is allowed. And we suppose that we shall some day take the advice of Mr. Capper, and others, and register our society, and use our reserve fund for the purposes which, as he says, the original advocates of the establishment of this fund intended it should be used for, viz., for loans, etc., to the members at a reasonable rate of interest and sufficient security. To illustrate how far behind we are in this matter we reproduce on another page a portion of the balance sheet of the Royal Naval Firemen's (Stokers') Society. Their business-like methods, under the guidance of their solicitor, is an example and a model to us. It would be far better to follow such a lead than stick up our dignity feathers and say we have nothing to learn from stokers. Their reserve fund, it is true, is much larger than

ours as also is their membership, and likewise, no doubt, their payments—although our wages are twice as large as theirs—but our reserve fund should, as Mr. Capper points out, have been a much larger one by now if it had been properly nursed. Devonport last year placed £18 to their Widows' reserve fund from the D.B. expense fund, the other branches did little or nothing. This proves that the same care is not exercised by all branches, and that our method of financial control needs readjustment. It was intended to ask all D.B. members to send 10/- to the reserve fund of our society when the concessions of 1896 came into operation, but dissension among the classes prevented this. It would have been less than their net gain for one month for all officers over 5 years seniority, and would have given the Association something like a backbone. But hard words and internecine war prevented this laudable desire from being achieved, when gunners, boatswains and carpenters started to fight and thus forgot the real advantages and the all-round monetary gain which the concessions had brought, and which were *present* to all over, and *prospective* to all under five years seniority at that time. However, all that is past and lament is useless, though lessons should be drawn which ought to prevent the repetition of such folly. What we want to do now is to legislate for the future, so that we may be strong and safe, equitable and just, in all our dealings. No one will be bold enough to say that we are all these things under our present rules, while each branch controls its own honorary funds and spends them in such disproportionate and different ways as their balance sheets shows them to be in the habit of doing at present. As for the honorary secretaryship being in the hands of the active service men; we think such an arrangement is desirable for all the reasons—and more—that our correspondents have pointed out. But they would, we presume, be unpaid and would only have a hand in the *administration* and not the *collection* of the funds. They would need to be most carefully selected at each branch, and should be the most earnest, polished and best educated men who could be found to serve in the office. Their duties of correspondence, etc., would be quite separate from those of the D.B. secretaries, and would only commence in regard to honorary funds where the other secretaries left off, viz., when the money was in the bank. It seems to us that those are the main points for consideration, and as the correspondence is still open we hope the various suggestions in this article will be freely criticised by whosoever has an

opinion on the matter, so that the best thought of the membership may be available to help those who are given the task of reconstruction; if such a course be eventually decided on by a majority vote at the home ports. We are all sinners and have sinned in these matters; but that is no reason why we should not all repent. There is no room or need for bitter reprimand,

but there is ample need and room for searching discussion and amendment. And in this matter there need be no heat, friction, or personal feeling, as we are all tarred with a bit of the same brush. In any case the above remarks are our contribution to the reasoning out of the matter, and we invite the criticism of the members.

*Gratifying
Testimonial.*

MR. W. B. MANN, boatswain, who has recently completed his three years in H.M.S. *Britannia*, has been the recipient of several substantial marks of the respect in which he was held by his late shipmates. Commissioned, Warrant, Petty Officers and men have each presented him with costly and useful articles, among which are a polished oak, silver-mounted inkstand; a large album; a handsome clock; a solid silver serviette ring; half-a-dozen

dessert spoons and forks, and an ivory-handled plated pickle fork. These presents were accompanied in each case with expressions of esteem and appreciation of his uniform kindness and ready help on all occasions.

OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY.

AS one of the pioneers of the Chiefs and Warrant Officers' Death Benefit Association, in its present form, that veteran worker Lieutenant Tuckwell, reminded us all in our last issue on the 1st of April next our society will complete a quarter of a century's most successful work. How valuable it has been to Widows and Orphans during that twenty-five years is absolutely beyond estimate. It has paid away a sum bordering on £16,000, in benefits to its deceased members' nominees ; but that does not cover the whole of its beneficial work and influences ; the real ramifications of which our secretaries and the stricken dependents of our deceased members are alone fully able to realise. Even the general membership do not fully recognise how our society acts the Good Samaritan, through its officials, at that hour when the night is blackest ; and how the bereaved are taken by the hand and helped through all their difficulties when their sore grief renders them almost incapable of transacting even necessary business. This is particularly the case with widows whom the shock of their great loss frequently renders absolutely